

Message Text

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INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 /026 R

DRAFTED BY EA/K:DLRANARD:LM

APPROVED BY EA: PCHABIB

S/S - MR. GAMMON

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY SEOUL

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 239067

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, KS, US

SUBJECT: ROKG CONCERN OVER NEWS CORRESPONDENT JULIE MOON

REF: SEOUL 7111

1. FOLLOWING EARLIER INQUIRY BY ROK AMBASSADOR HAHM
CONCERNING DEPARTMENT ATTITUDE ON JULIE MOON CASE, HABIB
OCTOBER 30 PROVIDED HAHM WITH FOLLOWING UNDERSTANDING
CONCERNING HER STATUS:

A. MOON IS CONSIDERED A STATELESS PERSON, HAVING APPARENTLY
RENOUNCED HER KOREAN CITIZENSHIP SOME TIME LAST YEAR. SHE
NOW CARRIES A GREEN CARD, I.E., ALIEN RESIDENCE. (SHE
APPARENTLY TRAVELS ABROAD ON BASIS OF INS REENTRY PERMIT;
HER HUSBAND, DONALD CHOI, IS A PERMANENT RESIDENT WHOSE
APPLICATION FOR AMERICAN CITIZENSHIP IS NOW BEING
PROCESSED.)

B. MOON IS ACCREDITED TO THE WHITE HOUSE PRESS CORPS AND
ALSO TO THE STATE DEPARTMENT. AS SUCH, SHE IS ELIGIBLE
TO GO ALONG ON PRESIDENTIAL TRIPS AS A MEMBER OF
ACCOMPANYING PRESS CORPS. (MOON WAS MEMBER OF PRESS PARTY
THAT ACCOMPANIED PRESIDENT NIXON TO BELGIUM AND SOVIET
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UNION EARLIER THIS YEAR.)

2. IN VIEW OF ABOVE, HABIB TOLD HAHM WE WOULD TAKE NO ACTION TO RESTRICT JULIE MOON FROM ACCOMPANYING PRESIDENT TO JAPAN AND KOREA, ASSUMING SHE SO APPLIED.

3. IN RESPONSE TO QUESTION HAHM SAID THAT IN HIS OPINION ROKG INTERESTS AND IMAGE WOULD BE BEST SERVED BY ALLOWING HER TO COME AND GO AT HER OWN INITIATIVE. HE SUGGESTED IT WOULD BE FAR BETTER TO IGNORE HER PRESENCE AS MEMBER OF PRESS PARTY THAN TO RUN RISK OF ANOTHER CAUSE CELEBRE WITH THE PRESS CORPS, WITH WHOSE LEADING MEMBERS MOON IS INTIMATELY ACQUAINTED. HAHM STATED HE HAD MADE SUCH RECOMMENDATION TO SEOUL BUT DID NOT APPEAR HOPEFUL THEY WOULD FOLLOW HIS SUGGESTION. HABIB SAID HE BELIEVED HAHM'S ADVICE WAS SOUND AND WE HOPED IT WOULD BE FOLLOWED.

4. IN YOUR DISCUSSIONS WITH ROKG YOU SHOULD MAKE IT KNOWN WE DO NOT INTEND TO BECOME INVOLVED IN ANY ACTION WHICH HAS EFFECT OF RESTRICTING RIGHT OF PRESS TO REPORT FREELY. YOU SHOULD NOT RPT NOT INDICATE OUR KNOWLEDGE OF HAHM'S VIEWS AND RECOMMENDATION HE HAS MADE. INGERSOLL

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